

Papyrus Magdalen P64

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The Magdalen P64 Papyrus

Fragments of the Gospel of Matthew

(Year ~ 50 A.D.)



The so-called Magdalen P64 consists of three small fragments which belong to a papyrus codex written on both sides. The fragments contain some words of the 26th chapter of Matthew's gospel and were acquired in the year 1901, in Luxor (Egypt), by the Egyptologist Charles Bousfield Huleatt, who after their identification presented them to the Magdalen College, Oxford.

After their first dating, the German papyrologist Carsten Peter Thiede dated the fragments P64 in 1995, as belonging to the period between the years 35 and 70 AD. (1) This dating harmonizes with the patristic evidence, proving that the Gospel of Matthew is very old and was written immediately after Jesus' death.

In order to date these fragments, Thiede followed a standard paleographic criterion; he confronted the style of the writing with other papyri of explicit date, as the papyrus found in Oxyrhynchus (district of Upper Egypt), which is dated and resembles like a drop of water to those of the P64, or the papyri found in Herculaneum, whose archaeological “stop” was caused by the eruption of Vesuvius in the year 79 AD and those of Qumran, who had their archaeological “stop”

between the years 68 and 70 AD, as confirmed by an examination of the carbon-14 on the material found in the caves, when the size of the pieces made it possible.

The small size of the P64 fragments did not allow the application of this test or the use of the mass spectrometry with accelerator, since these tests require at least 25 mg of material and some residue of papyrus may be destroyed. Thiede made use of other current technology tools, such as electron microscopy, and through these tests he reached the conclusion that the P64 fragments are from the first century; from around the year 50 AD. They were therefore written before the war of 70 AD, some few years after the death of Jesus.

The fragments are written in Greek and since history tells us that the Gospel of Matthew was originally written in Aramaic, Thiede's dating confirms that the Greek translation was made shortly after the first one.

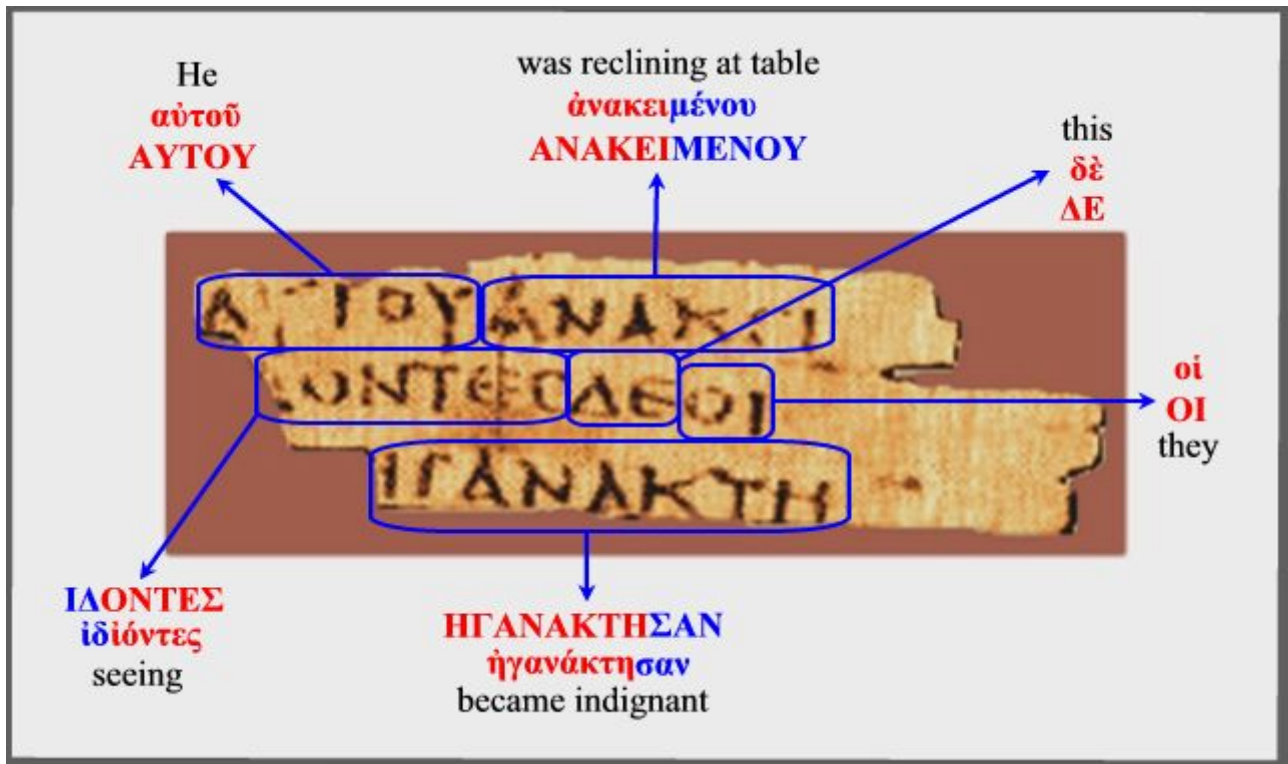
(1) See: C.P. Thiede's, *Papyrus Magdalen Greek 17 (Gregory-Aland P64). "A Reappraisal"*, ZPE 105. 1995, 13-20, pl. IX.

[Carsten Peter Thiede (Berlin, August 8, 1952 - Paderborn, December 14, 2004). Internationally renowned German historian as well as papyrologist and literary scholar.

He imparted instruction at the Universities of Oxford, London and Geneva, and later at the Staatsunabhängigen Theologischen Hochschule (Independent Institute of Theology) in Basel. He was member of the Center for German Studies of the Faculty of History at the Ben Gurion University of Negev in Beer-Sheva (Israel)].

Identification of the fragments

Identification in Matthew 26:7..8



Greek text:

“7 προσῆλθεν αὐτῷ γυνὴ ἔχουσα ἀλάβαστρον μύρου βαρυτίμου καὶ κατέχεεν ἐπὶ τῆς κεφαλῆς αὐτοῦ ἀνακειμένου.

8 ἰδόντες δὲ οἱ μαθηταὶ ἠγανάκτησαν λέγοντες, Εἰς τί ἡ ἀπώλεια αὕτη”.

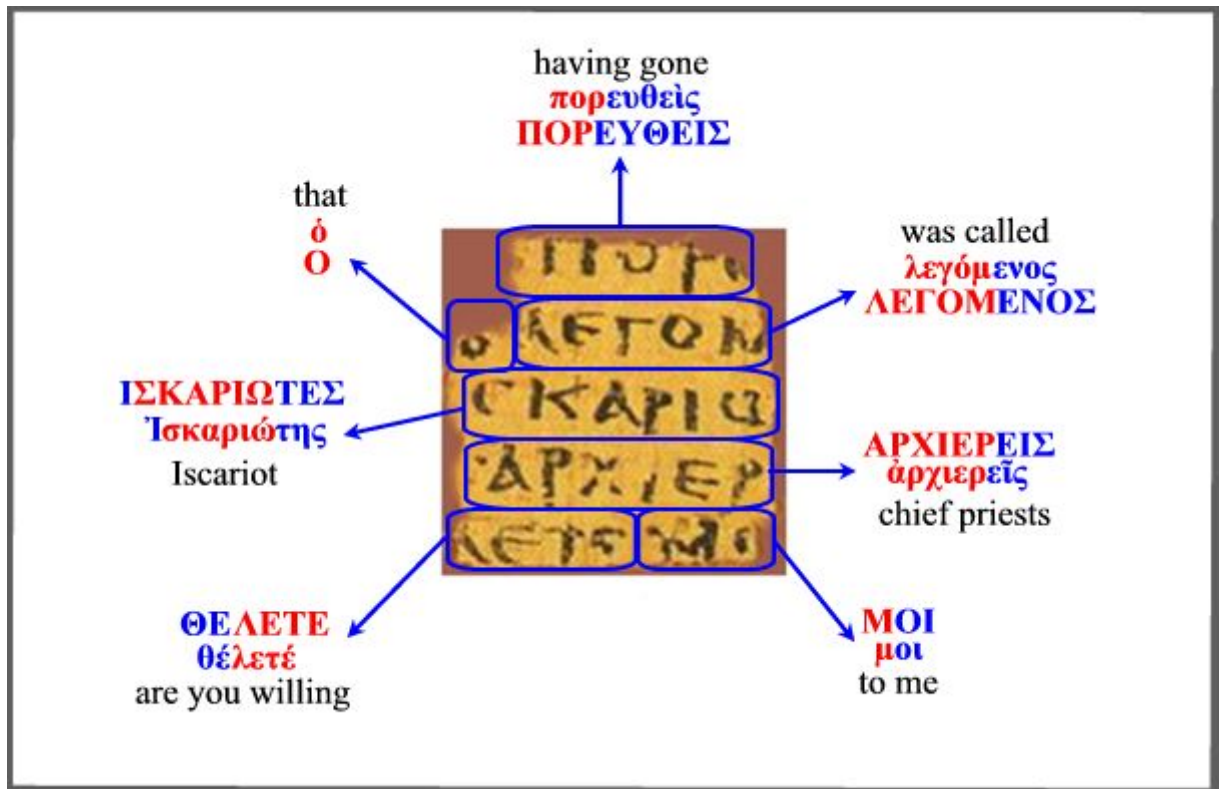
English text:

“7 To him came a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on his head; he was reclining at table,

8 seeing this, they became indignant, and said: To what purpose is this waste? ”.

Fragment 2

Identification in Matthew 26:14..15



Greek text:

“14 Τότε πορευθείς εἰς τῶν δώδεκα, ὁ λεγόμενος Ἰούδας Ἰσκαριώτης, πρὸς τοὺς ἀρχιερεῖς
15 εἶπεν, Τί θέλετέ μοι δοῦναι ἀγὼ ὑμῖν παραδώσω αὐτόν; οἱ δὲ ἔστησαν αὐτῷ τριάκοντα
ἀργύρια”.

English text:

“14 Then one of the twelve, that was called Judas Iscariot, having gone to the chief
priests,

15 said to them: What are you willing to give to me, and I will deliver him to you?
And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver”.

Fragment 3

Identification in Matthew 26:10



Greek text: “γνοὺς δὲ ὁ Ἰησοῦς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς, Τί κόπους παρέχετε τῇ γυναικί ἔργον γὰρ καλὸν ἠργάσατο εἰς ἐμέ·”.

English text:

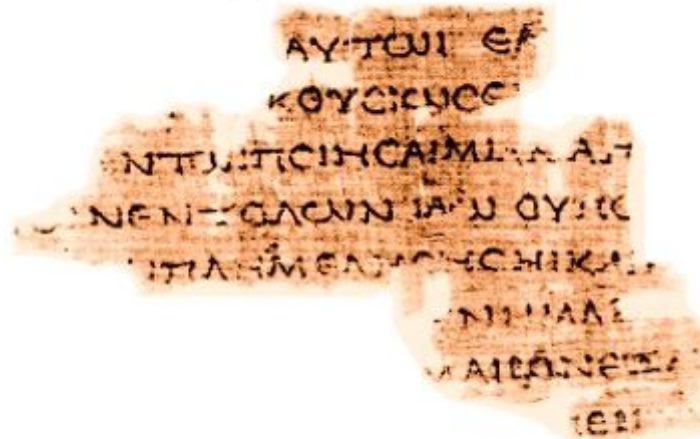
“10 When Jesus understood it, he said to them, Why do you annoy this woman? She has comply a good work with me”.

Without any variant of the text of Eberhard Nestle and Kurt Aland.

The cited manuscripts



Fragment of the LXX



Qumran 4QLXXLev^b (4Q120) Lev 2-5 [Goettingen #802]
Discoveries in the Judean Desert 9 (1992) plates 39-41
Rockefeller Museum, Jerusalem, Israel

Manuscript of Herculaneum

Before the eruption of the Vesuvius in 79 AC.



Original Link: <https://lavia.org/english/Archivo/MagdalenEN.htm>